AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF IN-SERVICE TEACHERS TOWARDS NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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It is the work that is expected to be carried out under the supervision of **Dr. Savita Sharma**.

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ABSTRACT

Professional standards of teachers are basically certain benchmarks or dimensions related to competency of teachers. We already know that these are called the set of clear expectations from the teachers after coming into a teaching profession. The concept of professional standards is relatively prominent and old in other countries but still quite new in Indian sub-continent. Recently, New Education Policy (2020) has come up with a standard document for professional standards of teachers named as National Professional Standards for teachers (NPST). The National Professional Standards for teachers (NPST) framework released by National council of Teacher Education (NCTE) in 2021 represents a quality based standard framework applicable to both pre-service and in-service teachers. National Professional Standards of Teachers being a very new approach to bring quality in teacher education presents a very large scope to be studied. Hence, the study focusses on the perception of In-service teachers towards National Professional Standards of Teachers. Also, their level of attainment in attaining the standards prescribed for them. The present study also focusses on the comparison of Professional standards of In-service teachers in government and private schools with respect to Professional Standards of teachers (NPST).

KEYWORDS: Professional Standards, NEP 2020, In-service teachers, National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST).

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INTRODUCTION

The term “Standards” has been defined with different meanings and with different contexts in different countries globally. Professional standards are guidelines or benchmarks that are used to define the knowledge, skills, and ethical behaviours expected from professionals within a specific field. These standards emphasize that all professionals in their career have to maintain a certain level of competence and integrity, promoting consistency, quality, and accountability in their work. The standards outline what professionals must achieve in their career, how they should behave in career, and the responsibilities they must have towards their profession, clients, and society. In the field of education, professional standards related to teachers include areas like Subject Knowledge and Pedagogy, this means how a teacher is demonstrating expertise in the particular subject matter and effective teaching practices. Secondly, the expertise of teacher to use appropriate assessment strategies to monitor and support student progress. They must be updated with educational trends and policies. These standards help maintain the quality in education and mark that teachers are inclined to satisfy the needs of students and society.

NEP (2020) has further emphasized the creation of Standards for Teachers which will bring accountability to the teaching profession. As per NEP (2020), these standards will successfully enable the:

- Scope and nature of teacher’s work
- Healthy working and service conditions
- Reinvented teacher education programme
- Registration of teachers
- Professional development and lifelong learning
- Uniformity in teacher education
- Teacher quality
- High teacher motivation
- Teacher accountability

NCTE has come upon with the set of guiding principles for teacher’s professional standards. These guiding principles or professional standards are the standard expectations from the teachers at pre-service as well as in-service level of teacher education. NPST visions teachers as enthusiastic, well-prepared, highly qualified and expert to teach at all levels of school education. The framework provided by NPST define or evaluate teachers in terms of the:

- Competence
- The three domains
- Teacher profile

The competence here consists of the different competences essential for the teaching profession like the knowledge, skills, values, attitude and understanding. the teachers are expected to be competent enough to impart these competences.

In NPST there are three domains, the first one is related to core values and ethics. In this domain teachers are expected to be well-acquainted with constitutional values, they should have professional ethics and values, they should be committed to students and their teaching profession, their professional relationships must be healthy with other teachers and they must have knowledge of responsible and ethical use of technology. The person in teaching profession must be honest, truthful, understanding and respectful.

The second domain is related to knowledge and practice. It consists of teacher's knowledge and understanding of their teaching subject, all the factors that affect student learning, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum, structures and technology integration in education. Through this domain teachers are expected to have understanding of the students and about the teaching-learning. Teachers are seemed to be bringing healthy learning environment in schools and provide best experiences to students. The teacher's focus should be on both the learning experiences within the school or outside the school.

Third is the domain of professional growth and development of teachers. It deals with the learning needs of students and teachers, reflective behavior and engagement and participation of teachers with learning community. In this domain, at every career stage the teachers are seemed to be committed to various professional development programmes for their growth. The professional teachers are seemed as well-acquainted with their own learning needs and work towards them. This domain also includes teacher's reflective attitude on the career development activities and engagement with community for learning.

NPST has divided the school teachers at three levels on the basis of competencies related to teaching profession. These are:

- Proficient Teacher (Praveen Shikshak)
- Advanced Teacher (Unnat Shikshak)
- Expert Teacher (Kushal Shikshak)

The proficient teacher is professionally sound to demonstrate vital teaching skills. This is the first stage of teacher on the basis of competencies. This level is related to pre-service teacher training stage. At this level, the teacher educators supervise the teachers to help them to improve teaching practice. when the teacher gets ready and started showing best performance in teaching practice, they are expected to start working towards the advanced stage. At advanced stage, the teachers apply their learned teaching skills in their teaching and learning in the school. When these teachers reach to advanced stage, they are motivated and ready for other higher level i.e expert teacher stage. They will be guided by the senior teachers to evaluate their teaching-learning skills before achieving the advanced teacher stage.

The Advanced Teacher or Unnat Shikshak, is well-versed and capable of showing best practices in teaching and learning. They will become capable and expected to play the role of peer leader

to proficient teacher. Apart from this, they will also be observed by experienced people like head/principal etc. Once they are ready for the next career stage, i.e expert teacher stage, they will start working for it. They become capable of working with new curricula, skill integration and learning needs of diverse group of students. They will know how to reflect on student problems. They become capable of working with the community.

The expert teacher is the highest level of reaching the professional standards. The teachers at this level are expert to mentor other teachers as well as in leading school's professional development programme. The teachers continue improving themselves and their skills as well as guiding other teachers. It very satisfying to see their capacity to improve themselves as well as others.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Professional standards are known to bring quality in the field of teacher education and professional growth of teachers. The purpose of professional standards is to bring competent teachers. "The standard based performance of teachers always leads to accountability making the system more accountable, Darling-Hammond (2004)". They are expected to rise the performance of teachers, Sachs (2010). Darling-Hammond (2006), describes "Professional standards as frameworks that delineate the core knowledge, skills, and ethical practices necessary for effective teaching".

Global perspectives towards Professional Standards of Teachers

The countries globally started working towards professional standards for teachers since the starting of the new millennium (Allard, Mayer, & Moss, 2014; Caena,2014; Ingvarson, 2012). United States has its national board for professional teaching standards (PBPTS) to promote quality in teacher education area. In a study by Ingvarson & Hattie (2008) on American teachers found that PBPTS helps a lot American teachers in improving teacher quality and student outcomes. The best practices in United States means working on five components, content focus, active learning, coherence, sustained duration and collective participation (Desimone and Garet (2015)). In Japan too, they focus on formal and informal ways of development of professionalism among teachers. Both almost have strategies of developing teachers through inculcation of standards in teacher education (Collinson and ono (2001)). In England, they have led to "national professionalism" Whitty (2014).

In Australia, the teacher's professional standards are example of promoting organizational learning. They support pre-service teachers. However, it is blamed most of the time as technical and instrumentalist, Lamber and Gray (2020). The system has gone through lot of changes through the last decade. The recent advances in national professional standards shows that they have worked a lot on the latest knowledge and practices expected from their teachers. They have divided the national standards into four stages. These standards are made within different contexts keeping in mind different cultures and diversity (Santoro (2013)).

Talking about the developing nations like Pakistan, the national standards were set by 2009 with the help of USAID providing support to ministry of education. In a study done by Mahmood, Hina and Arshad (2020) on pre-service teachers of Pakistan, towards the awareness of national standards, it was seen that the awareness of teachers towards standards was unsatisfactory. There was lack of professional development. There was lack of policy assessment strategies.

Teacher's Attitude towards Professional Standards

Adoniou and Gallagher (2017) did a study on attitude of teachers and principals towards professional standards in Australia. The number of teachers participated were 36 and they were studied for a period of 12 months. It was found that both teachers and principals had positive attitude towards professional standards. Khanolanien (2019) studied the attitude of Russian teachers towards professional standards. The mixed-method study on 123 teachers reveal that teachers feel it is important to adapt to the standards but they are not prepared for it. There existed a confusion between what the professional standards convey and how they can be implemented. Teachers were seeming to be negative towards the reforms. The reason can be the low motivation towards the standards. Iskander (2015) studied eleven individual teachers to study their attitude towards national standards in Indonesia and results showed that many teachers expressed the fidelity towards the national standards. They prefer their own contexts while preferring adaptation to national standards.

Teacher's perceptions of Professional Standards

In a study by Zionts, Shellady and Zionts (2010), they did a study to analyze teacher's perception of professional standards. They try to study the perspectives of special educators towards the professional standards in teacher education. They found that even though the special educators found professional standards of real importance but they found them difficult to implement. In a study by Donnelly and Saddler (2009), when secondary school science teachers were studied to identify their attitude towards professional standards and accountability and the impact of standards on teachers and students, it was visible that teachers had both positive and negative reaction towards the standard based accountability. Half of them were against rigid standards and suggested flexibility and modification in curriculum based on standards. In a two -year long longitudinal study by Frykholm (1996), when pre-service teachers were asked about their feeling towards professional standards with their beliefs, perception, philosophy and classroom actions. It was found that even though the pre-service teachers accepted the standards in their classroom practice but they do need a tool to analyze their performance based on professional standards. Sometimes they feel pressurized from the higher authority to implement professional standards in their work life. They prioritize cooperation from the higher bodies for successful implementation of standards.

Role of Professional Standards in improvement of Teacher Professionalism

In a study by Swabey, Castleton and penny (2010), when pre-service teachers perception towards preparedness to teaching was studied in relation to professional knowledge, professional relationships and professional practice. It was found that majority of pre-service

teachers agreed that the pre-service teacher education helped them in relation to various aspects of professional standards. They infer that it helped them to increase their credibility and accountability. Hill (2004) found that professional standards do help in professional development but they also take the component of student learning superficially. The standard based professional learning helps teachers to improve their quality as well as pedagogical knowledge. The longitudinal study done by Hill et al. (2004) confirmed the increase in teacher quality as a component of teacher professional standards. In New Zealand, in a study on 45 English medium teachers, it was found that professional standards help in evolving professionalism among teachers. The quality teaching was strengthened as an outcome of implementation of professional standards. The teacher's quality had a direct impact on students' success. The policy makers were stand responsible to create a standard system which can keep the teachers motivated towards the standards. Teacher professionalism and teacher's knowledge is increased through the direct correlation of professional standards. Guerriero (2017) defined the professional expectations from a teacher. Lastly, it can be said that professional standards are an important factor in development of professionalism among teachers. In a study by Munawar, Sattar and gull (2020) on secondary school teachers in Pakistan, it was found that "secondary school teachers had difference of opinion towards national professional standards".

NEED OF THE STUDY

Professional standards will provide a great help in creating quality teachers for the educational system in India. On the basis of NEP (2020) guidelines, NCTE has released National professional standards for teachers (NPST). This framework which came in 2021 applies to both pre-service and in-service teachers. The present study focusses on the perception of In-service teachers towards National professional standards for teachers (NPST) because it's a very first time, such type of framework has been prepared for teachers and it is necessary to understand the idea, awareness and opinion of teachers towards it. The teacher's awareness and knowledge are important towards the National professional standards for teachers. Hence, through this study the understanding and perception of In-service teachers towards the teacher standards will be known. Secondly, it will also help to understand the attitude of In-service teachers towards the National professional standards for teachers, it will help to understand the direction whether they are positive or negative and can help to predict their future teaching practices. Thirdly, the study will help to understand how much in-service teachers are professionally prepared as a teacher. The gaps in policy and attitude which can hinder the future implementation of NPST can be easily identified. Fourthly, the standards are designed in a way that they will improve quality of teachers and if there is a scope of modification, it will help policy makers to adjust curriculum, training methods and professional development programs in future. It will also bridge the gap between policy and practice. Finally, the findings will be helpful to teachers, policy makers, school heads and students to understand the scenario and it will also help to make global comparisons within the teachers around the world. Surprisingly, there is not much work done on the standards of teachers in India. Hence, it will also fill the gap in literature.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1)Perception

According to Cambridge dictionary (2024) “Perception is defined as a belief or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things seem.” It is how their brain interprets and organizes sensory information from the environment. In my study it refers to the idea, belief, opinion, awareness and understanding of In-service teachers towards the National Professional Standards for Teachers ((Rock (1985), Schoenfeld & Cumming (1962)).

2)**In-service teachers**

In-service teachers refer to all the teachers who got employed after completing their training and currently working in schools in private and government sector in India.

3)**Professional standards**

According to NPST (2021), Professional standards are defined as “The standards which are used as a benchmark or a tool of measurement of a professional’s performance to be considered competent for quality performance”. These standards emphasize what is valued in the particular profession. In the present study, Professional standards refer to the Professional standards of teaching profession as envisaged by the NCTE’s National Professional Standards for teacher’s framework.

4)**National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST)**

It refers to the recent framework of professional standards in teaching released by the NCTE. The framework was released in 2021 and applies to both pre-service and in-service teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions will be:

1) What is the perception of In-service teachers towards National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in Government and Private schools of India?

2) What is the level of attainment of In-service teachers with respect to National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in Government and Private schools of India?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study will be:

1) To study the perception of In-service teachers towards National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in government and private schools of India.

2) To examine the knowledge of In-service teachers towards National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in government and private schools of India.

3) To analyze In-service teachers' attitudes towards the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in government and private schools of India.

4) To assess the level of attainment of In-service teachers in meeting competencies of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in government and private schools of India.

5) To identify the challenges faced by In-service teachers in understanding or implementing National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST).

DELIMITATIONS

The present study will not cover the perception of teacher educators and pre-service teachers. It will be delimited to In-service teachers working in private and government schools of India.

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

Methodology

This present research will be exploratory in nature and use mixed-method approach. Descriptive survey method will be used as a method of study.

Tools to be used

- Structured questionnaire
- Focus group discussions
- Attitude scale

Sampling and Population

The population for this research will consists of all the In-service teachers teaching in government and private schools of India. Out of the total population, the sample will be collected from the Telangana state as per convenience. Telangana state has 10 districts. The Schools in Telangana both in private and public sectors are divided into districts. Each district has multiple blocks, and each block has multiple clusters. Each cluster has a list of schools. The data for the research will be collected from the Hyderabad district which consists of 16 blocks. To make the sample representative at least 25 teachers from each block will be selected using random sampling technique.

Sample size

A sample of total 400 In-service teachers including 200 government school teachers and 200 private school’s teachers will be taken from government and private schools of India.

Data Analysis

Data will be analyzed using the suitable techniques both qualitatively and quantitatively.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1) Understanding of NPST Awareness

A clearer picture of how well In-service teachers are aware of the NPST and its components, which could highlight gaps in training or communication. It Can inform teacher education programs on where to focus efforts in curriculum design related to NPST.

2) Attitude Towards NPST Adoption

It will give Insight into whether In-service teachers are enthusiastic or hesitant about the implementation of NPST. It will Help policymakers and educators address resistance or concerns regarding the standards.

3) Perceived Relevance and Applicability

It will help Understand In-service teachers' views on how applicable and relevant NPST standards are to their future teaching practices. It Could suggest adjustments to the NPST or indicate the need for more practical training aligned with the standards.

4) Challenges Identified by In-Service Teachers

It will help Identify perceived challenges in understanding, implementing, or meeting NPST criteria during In-service education. It Can guide teacher education institutions to better prepare students for NPST compliance.

5) Impact on Professional Identity Formation

It will help in the Exploration of how NPST influences the formation of In-service teachers' professional identity and expectations of the teaching role. It will Provide insights into how standards shape early professional development.

6) Preparedness for Professional Standards

It will help in Assessment of how prepared In-service teachers feel to meet the NPST. It will help Highlight areas of strength and improvement within the training programs to ensure alignment with NPST goals.

7) Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on teachers' perceptions, recommendations could be made to improve NPST training modules or its integration into teacher education programs. These insights could help in shaping both national policies and institutional practices to support better NPST implementation.

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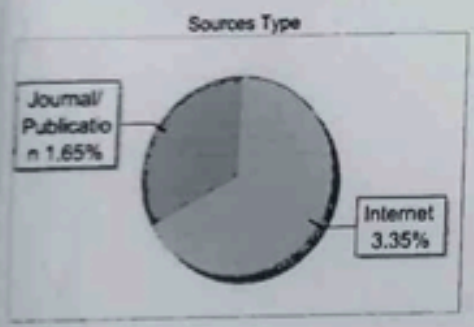

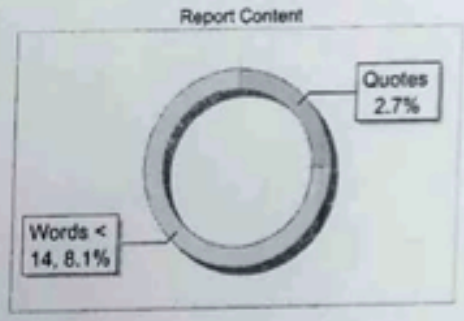

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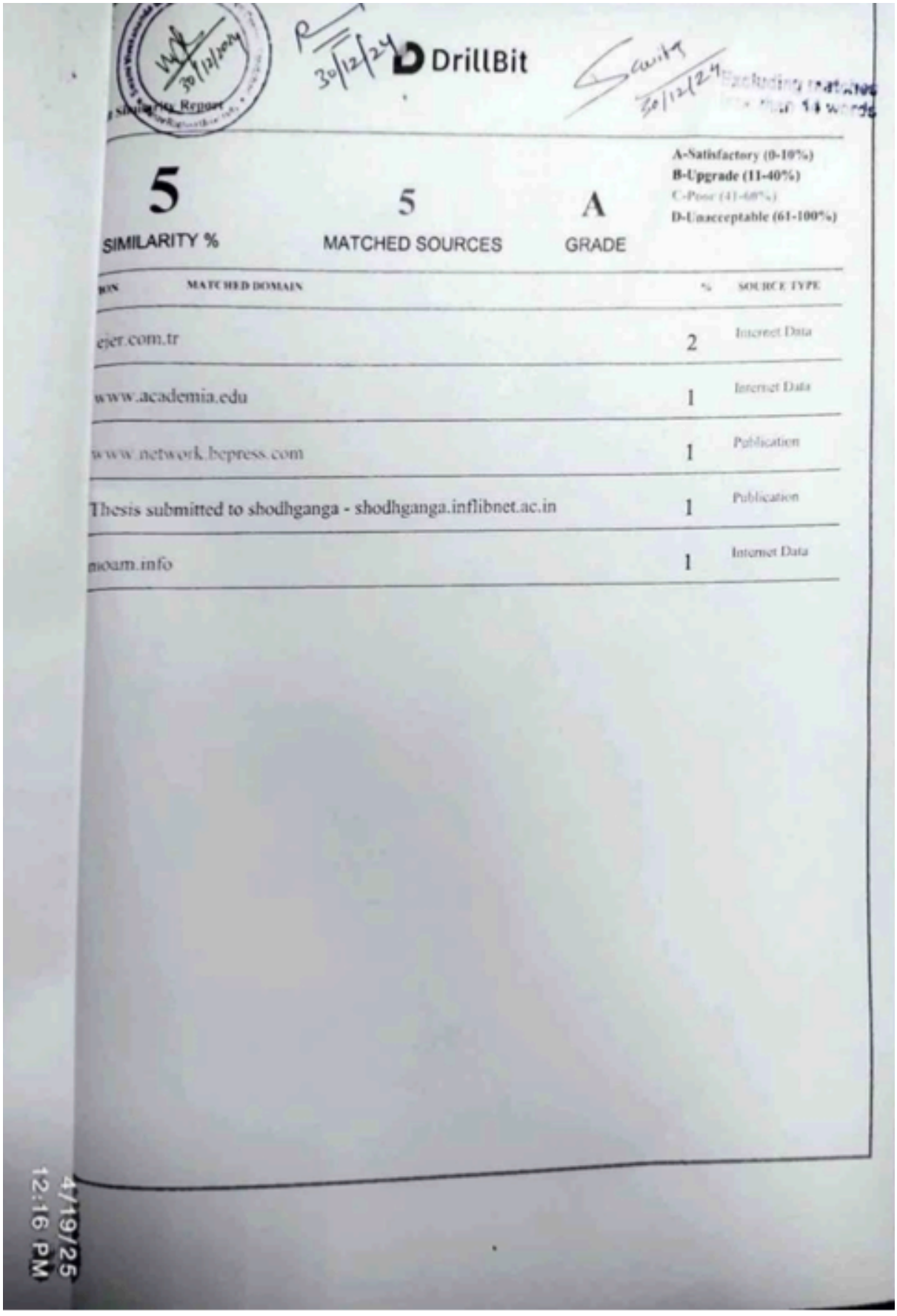
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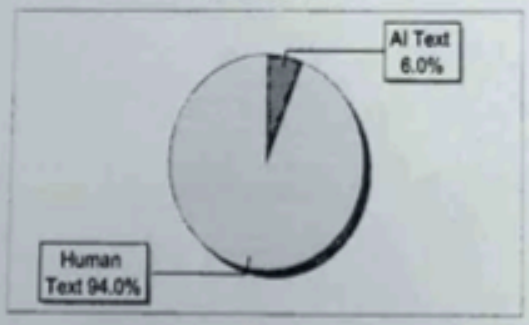

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